11. Giving up Land

The Crows signed another Treaty on June 12, 1880, giving up the land west of the Boulder River. Congress made the treaty an Act on April 11, 1882. For the land taken the Government offered to pay $30,000 per year for 25 years. The money was to pay the cost of running the Reservation. The Government also promised annuities to the Indians. The Crows, in turn, permitted Cattlemen to drive their herds across the Reservation. In 1882 the Reservation Treaty of 1868 finally passed Congress, too.

The General Manager of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company wrote to Senator Henry L. Dawes. The General Manager said the Crow Indian territory along the Railroad could not be farmed without irrigation. But he thought with irrigation the country might become productive, and it would be quickly settled if taken from the Crows.

In late fall of 1883, Dawes' Senate Committee visited the Old Agency. Bernard Bravo interpreted the comments of Iron Bull, Two Belly, Plenty Coos, Takes Wrinkle, and Thin Belly.

Iron Bull was the first to speak. "We want the Great Father to give us cattle, and we want cows that will have young ones, and we will put them at the foot of the mountains and all along the creeks, and by the springs." He did not want the Agency to be moved to the Little Horn River even though the eastern part of the Reservation was better for grazing.

Two Belly expected the Government to send food to the Indians even after they learned how to farm and raise cattle.

Plenty Coos told the Committee that the Crows had already paid for the cattle the Government should give them. Senator Dawes asked how they were paid for. Plenty Coos answered, "We sold the Boulder country and all the timber on the creeks to pay for the cattle." Senator Dawes said the Government wanted to pay the Crows for the land, but the problem was that the Government did not know the best way to spend the money. Plenty Coos said the money should be used to buy cattle.

When Thin Belly gave his testamony, he was asked if he could farm the entire Reservation by himself. He said he could!

It was apparent that the Crows and the Senate Committee were not communicating very well. Agent Henry J. Armstrong was questioned next. He said the Crows only raised vegetables and they did not raise a quarter of what they needed.

Special Agent Q. R. Milburn had been building cabins on the Little Horn River where the new Agency was going to be built. The cabins Milburn was building included 160 acre farms. Milburn believed the Crow Indian was capable of building cabins.

As game was disappearing, he believed it was time for the Crows to start farming. But Spotted Horse and Crazy Head claimed the Little Horn and would not let Milburn work on the cabins!

Captain J. N. Wheelan, of Fort Custer felt that two-thirds of the Crow Reservation was useless to the Crows. The man who was chairman

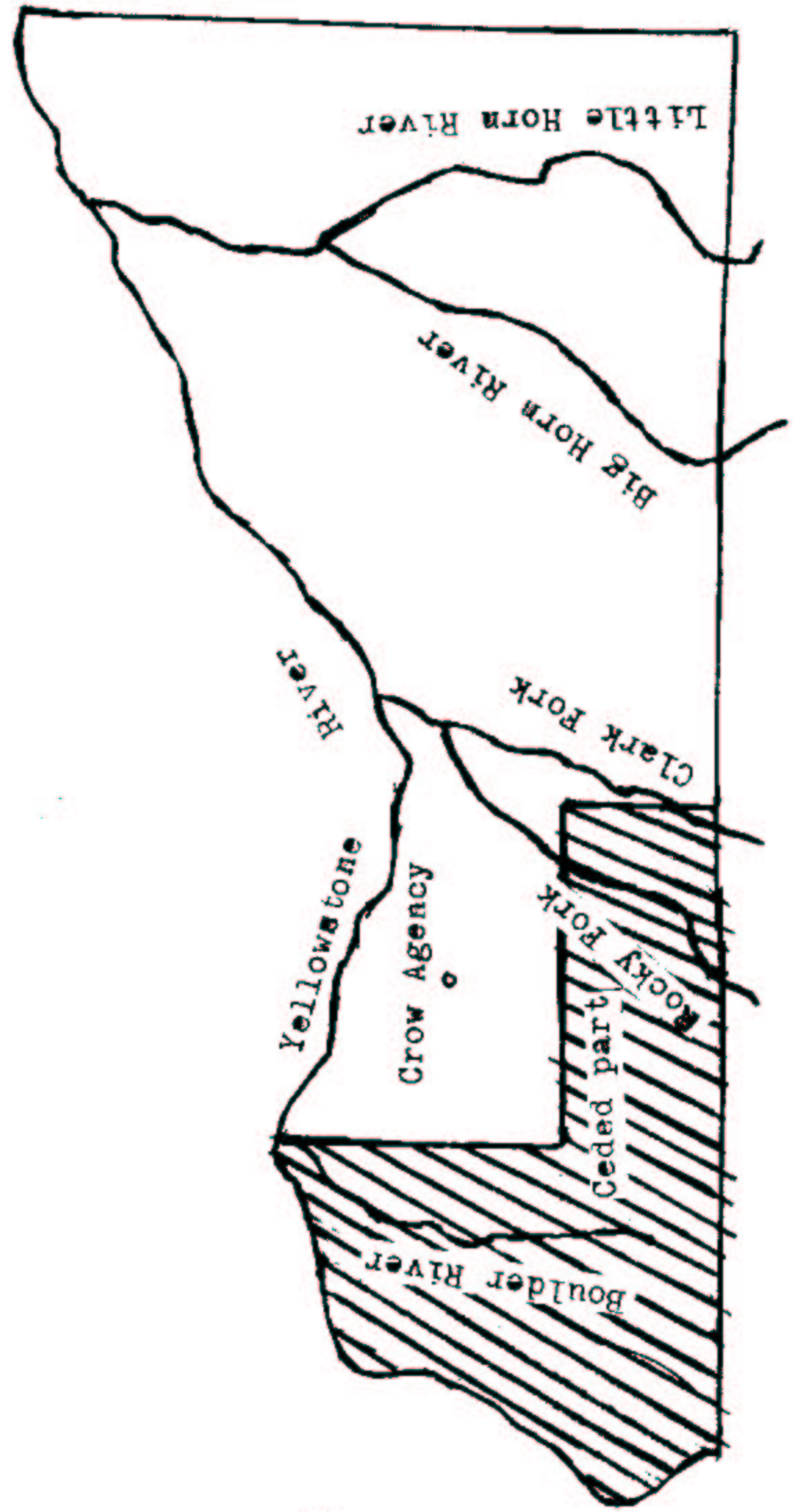
of the Purchasing Committee thought any Indians not wearing the clothes the Government sent them should not receive any food either.

After listening to all these men, Senate Committee concluded that the soil around the Old Agency was very poor for farming. Game had vanished, and the Crows were dependent on the Government. Supplies from the Government came in small amounts; they were no longer sufficient. The Reservation, which included empty hunting grounds, had become too large for the Crows. The eastern part of the Reservation was more valuable for the Crows than the western part because only farming and ranching remained for them. Therefore they should move to the eastern part which was suitable for that.

12. No More Dancing

In 1884 the Secretary of the Interior Department revised the Government rules which regulate Indian Reservations. The Government agents on the reservations were supposed to put the Indians to work. They were to "persuade" the Indians to give up their ponies for cattle and geese. It was illegal for whites to sell liquor to the Indians. Only small groups of Indians were allowed to visit other reservations, and then only for short lengths of time. In 1882, the Secretary of Interior had written about getting rid of what is called "Old

THE CESSION OF 1882



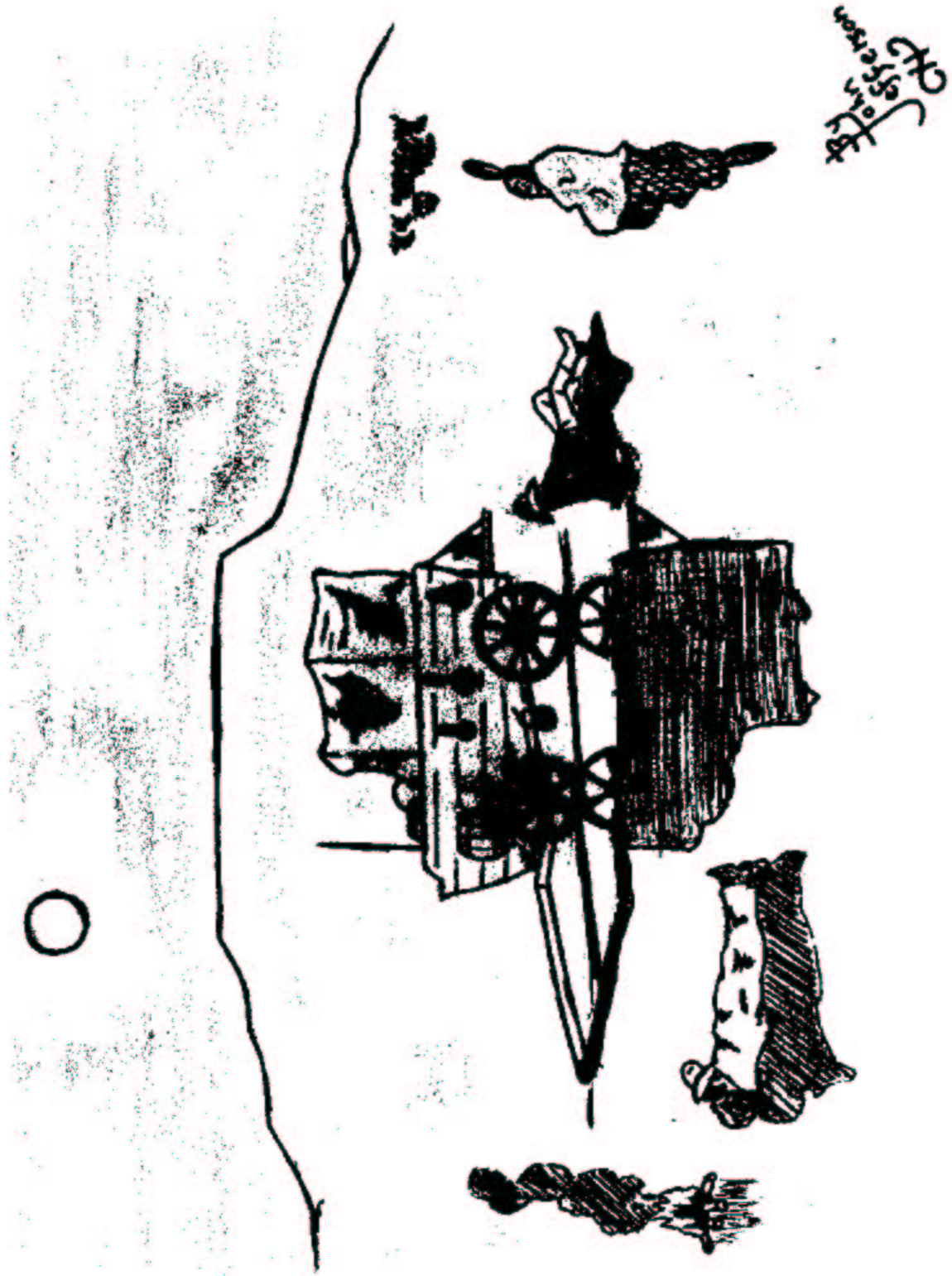
heathenish dances such as the sun-dance, scalp dance, etc." To get rid of the "evil practices" the rules of 1884 called for starting a Court of Indian offences on each reservation. The court had ruling over such "Indian offences" as sun-dances, scalp dances, and war dances by withholding rations for 10 days. It could give Indians who lived with more than one woman 20 days of labor. The Court could place a medicine man in prison for 10 days if he was found guilty of holding back progress on the reservation! An Indian could be thrown in prison for 30 days if he took property from someone who practiced the custom of mourning for the dead. Finally, the Court could punish Indians who gave or sold liquor with 30 to 90 days in prison or by withholding rations for the same length of time.

13. The New Life

By 1885 the Agency had moved to the Little Horn River. Agent Henry J. Armstrong found the Crows to be so eager for work that he did not have enough white men to train them. The Agency had given 746 cattle to 70 Indian families. In the Spring the Crows participated in their first roundup which began at the mouth of Rotton Grass Creek. There were Indians farming along Little Horn Valleys and also along Pryor Creek.

No missionary work was being conducted. Agent Armstrong thought there was much work

THE MOVEMENT OF THE AGENCY IN 1884

for missionaries, but at the same time he admitted "I do not think there is any Crow Indian that feels that he needs to be saved. They think they are the chosen people." He recommended that five missionaries come to the Reservation. He suggested the Government starve the Indians until they gave up enough children to fill the Government schools.

A new dormitory had been built for the Crow Boarding School. Eight miles of irrigation ditch had been completed. The Crow Indians were about to enter a new kind of life--the life of a working Indian. The migration was over, the buffalo gone. There was only the Reservation.